Statement

The High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development is mandated to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations to Member States on the Agenda's implementation and follow up.

It is important for the Ministerial Declaration of the Forum to highlight the relevance of the role to be played by civil society in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This issue was addressed directly in the Rio+20 Declaration. Civil society has made significant contributions to the outcome documents of the post-2015 sustainable development agenda, so it is only natural that it should be included in the efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

This inclusion and cooperation should take various forms. In some countries, like the Dominican Republic, the government has created a special inter-institutional commission for sustainable development, whose objective is "to promote the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in its three dimensions, through public policies reflected in planning instruments".

We acknowledge and encourage initiatives taken in this sense. However, we propose a higher level of participation by civil society in these endeavours. The composition of national or regional commissions should guarantee a membership comprised at least 30 percent by civil society. Commissions of this sort should also expressly provide for and encourage the participation of the private sector, through the inclusion of business associations. It should also include local governments and academia.

For example, the Mediterranean Commission on Sustainable Development, an institution created by the Barcelona Convention, is made up of 40 members. Rotating representatives from local authorities, business communities, NGOs, experts and academics, comprise 18 of them and that represents almost 50 percent of its total membership.

A wider and more inclusive structure can guarantee a multiplicity of points of view and experiences that will result in the proposal of more effective and efficient measures for the implementation of the development agenda. The outcome document could take note of the relevance of inclusiveness in this effort.

The Ministerial Declaration should also encourage the inclusion of a scientific panel in National or Regional Sustainable Development Commissions. For developing countries, one major concern is the low levels of investment in research and development, which typically results in a scientific community that is either inexistent or with very limited reach.

Including a scientific panel in the membership of the body responsible for sustainable development promotion and supervision, using national human resources as well as international cooperation in the field can result in better-informed Commissions for Sustainable Development at the national and regional level. Such is the case we have in Finland, where an expert panel gives input to the Commission about the main obstacles for sustainable development, while at the same time identifying necessary research areas.

The scientific panel's findings could be used as basis to make proposals for public-private partnership opportunities. These new PPPs could help create and

shape new markets that are SDG oriented. The inclusion of the business sector is, again, key for finding effective multisectoral solutions.

We must learn some lessons from the Millennium Development Goals: inclusiveness at all levels is crucial to achieve an effective global impact. Moreover, the state of the global economy calls for dramatic increases in the efficiency of complex global efforts such as the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda.

Let us build upon the remarkable and unprecedented effort of inclusion we witnessed at the Open Working Group for the SDGs and the same time seize the opportunity to make the implementation of the agenda even more inclusive than in its creation.